1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

226
343

Fig. 114. Pole-built fish fence across the Pilcomayo, with openings at intervals. On a platform in front of one of the openings a Choroti Indian is sitting, fishing with a dip-net. Gran Chaco, Bolivia. Sketched from a photograph by Erl. Nordenskiöld.

In figs. 116 and 117 is shown a bar net of caraguatá yarn. When I, by barter, acquired this net, for the reasons already given it was not mounted on its frame, but was kept rolled up, and with its mouth drawn together (see figure), in order to take up as little room as possible. The size of the net shows that it could be extended, in a triangular shape, between the arms — about 3 m long — of a fork (see fig. 113). The yarn of which the net is made is two-ply, and has a diameter of about 1.5 mm. The meshes are square, with sides of 4 cm. 227

In my collection there are also nets with meshes whose sides are, respectively, 2.6 and 1.6 cm. But the Choroti have probably nets with still smaller meshes, for I have in my collection a mesh-spacer which is only 1.1 cm wide.[1] Nets that are as small-meshed as this, are suitable for catching bait for fishing with hook and line.

Fig. 115. Detail sketch of a platform of the kind seen in fig. 114. From Erl. Nordenskiöld.

The largest mesh-spacer in my collection is very nearly 4 cm wide (fig. 118), and would therefore have been used for the weaving of nets

[1] Ethnos. 03. 3. 241.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

227 of the kind reproduced in figs. 116 and 117. The mesh-spacers are made of some hard, heavy wood, and usually very smoothly polished.

226 As I have said before, the Choroti also fish with hook and line, although this method of fishing is not by far as common as fishing with nets. In fig. 119 I have reproduced a fish-hook and line. The fish-hook has been made by the Choroti themselves from some awl-like tool acquired in

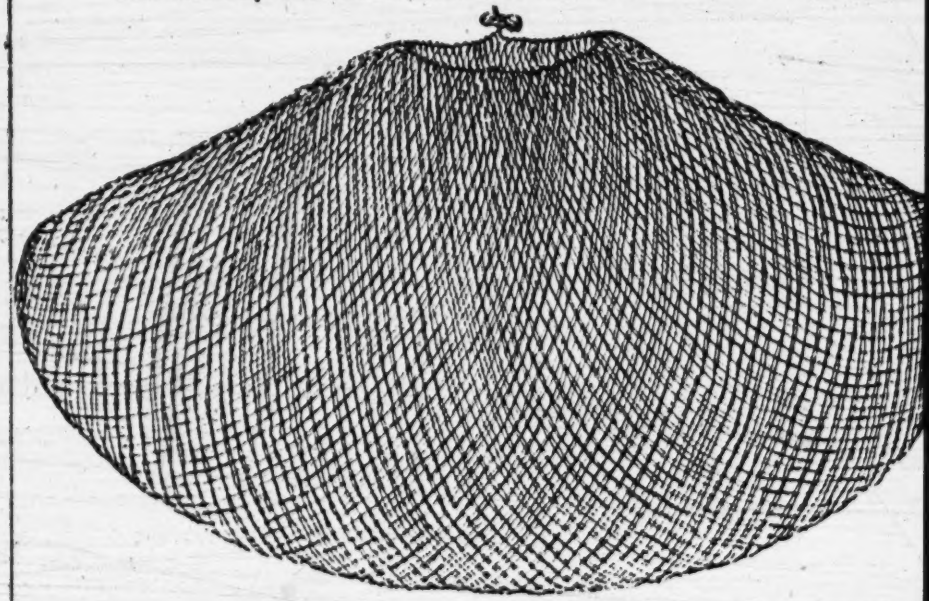

Fig. 116. Net made of caraguatá fibre yarn, for extending in a triangular shape in the way seen in fig. 112. It is here shown with its mouth drawn together, by means of a string running along its edge, so as to be more easily rolled up for transport. The meshes are quadratic, with sides 4 cm long (see fig. 117). The yarn, which is two-ply, has a diameter of about 1.0 mm. Choroti. Gran Chaco. Bolivia. 1/10. Riksm. 03. 3. 337.

some way or other from the whites. Formerly the Choroti probably used fish-hooks of bone or hard wood. Such hooks are still being used by the Lengua.[1] The line, which consists of caraguatá, is not threaded through any eye, or tied to any notches in the top of the shank of the hook, but is laid straight along the upper part of the hook, and fastened by winding on it a thinner caraguatá string. At the lower part of the hook, a caraguatá

[1] Grubb (1), p. 81.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

136 I have mentioned that the Choroti do not possess any water-craft, so
481 that when fishing with nets they often have to wade or swim. In doing
292 this, they expose themselves to being attacked by palometa fishes. As a protection for their legs in wading, the Indians occasionally wear a kind of mail stockings of caraguatá (see p. 54), but when they are swimming, they often get badly mauled by these fierce fishes, and I saw several Choroti with enormous scars from the bites of palometas (fig. 53). It also happens, now and again, that Indians, whem swimming, get killed by caymans, which, here and there, are plentiful.

[286 824]

Fig. 118. Mesh-spacer of palo santo (Bulnesia sarmienti). Length 14.0 cm, width 3.8 cm; thickness along longitudinal axis 0.8 cm. The thickness decreases towards the longer edges, which are rounded. Choroti. Gran Chaco. Bolivia. Riksm. 03. 3. 242.

222 In the collection of the fruits, roots and pith of wild plants the Choroti possess an important source of subsistence. The Chaco Indians obtain edible fruits from, inter alia, the algaroba (Prosopis alba), the chañar (Gourliea decortitans), the mistol (Zizyphus mistol) and the tusca (Acacia aroma). The rootstocks of the caraguatá, or chahuar (Bromelia serra), plant are used for food by these Indians, and the same applies to the pith of the fan palm (Copernicia australis). For pulling down within reach the fruit-bearing branches of trees, the Indians make use of wooden hooks with a short arm and a long one, the latter then serving as a handle, whilst the tree branch which is to be bent down, is hooked with the shorter arm of the implement.[1] In digging up the spiny caraguatá plants the Choroti use a forked stick.[2]

[227]

241

Fig. 119. Fishing hook of iron, with line of caraguatá fibre. Choroti. Gran Chaco. Bolivia. 1/3. Riksm. 03. 3. 238.

Fig. 120. Fish club of palo santo (Handle upwards). Choroti. Gran Chaco. Bolivia. 1/6. Riksm. 03. 3. 87.

At the time of my stay among the Choroti, the part of the tribe with whom I was in touch carried on no other agriculture than the growing of pumpkins in a primi-

[1] Nordenskiöld (11), fig. 3.
[2] Nordenskiöld (13), fig. 49.

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6
Toba 5112

C 241

tive fashion, and, according to Nordenskiöld and Karsten, such agriculture as the Choroti engage in, is still on a very inconsiderable scale. Nowadays, however, these Indians cultivate — although not to any great extent — the following plants, viz.: pumpkins, cucumbers, water melons, maize, beans, manioc, sweet potatoes, tobacco and cotton.[1] Their only agricultural implements consist of digging-sticks of hard, heavy wood, and a kind of paddle-like, wooden spades. A typical digging-stick is reproduced in fig. 27.

C T [227]

It is probable that the Choroti originally had no other domestic animals than dogs, and the only tame animals I personally saw among this tribe were dogs and fowls. Those of the Choroti Indians who are living in the neighbourhood of the Pilcomayo possess, beside the animals mentioned, also sheep, goats, cattle, horses and cats. Sheep-rearing has now come to be of great importance to the Indians, who use the wool as material for mantles, fillets, etc.

C 231

C 361 166

Fig. 121. Cord on which fish are strung by means of a large needle of hard, heavy wood. This kind of carrying-gear is very common among the Choroti. The specimen here reproduced originates, however, from the Toba (neighbours of the Choroti). Gran Chaco. Bolivia. $^{1}/_{6}$. Riksm. 03. 3. 766.

As mentioned, the Choroti are a nomadic people. Their changes of location may be due to various circumstances. When pasture is exhausted in one place, they must look about for another; they move on to more profitable fishing-waters, or wander into regions that are rich in game and wild, edible plants. But there may also be other, and quite different, reasons for the Choroti's leaving their old abodes. In epidemics, when deaths are plentiful, it happens that the Choroti abandon their villages, and this they may also occasionally do if they are apprehensive of visits from whites (see pp. 47 and 48). In a first-rate monograph, Dr. Ragnar Numelin has exhaustively analyzed the causes governing the nomadic instinct in primitive peoples. As re-

C [731]

[1] Nordenskiöld (11), p. 29.

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909)1919
SK6 Choroti SK6
Ashluslay SK5

IX.

Fishing-tackle.

The tackle used by the Choroti and Ashluslay is of two kinds of nets, as well as the bow and arrow[1]) The Ashluslay have also a species of basket which they place over the fish they catch in swamps. As far as I know, catching fish by means of poison is not in vogue. Angling hooks of Indian manufacture I have not come across, and European hooks are not popular as objects of barter among the Choroti and Ashluslay. To net fishing belong clubs, with which the fish are killed, and wooden needles with line of the same material to draw up the captured fish. The *nets*[2]) used by the Choroti and Ashluslay I have seen employed by the Chiriguano, Chané, Toba and Tapiete, but by no other tribes that I got to know on my travels. Nets like the dip net are known to me from books, but only among the Lengua[3]) and from the N.W. of Brazil.[4]) I therefore count the net among the cultural elements with whose distribution I am imperfectly acquainted. Small, short *clubs*, only used in killing fish, were seen by me among the Matacо, the

[1]) In my book »Indianerleben» I wrote that the Choroti and Ashluslay do not employ the bow and arrow for killing fish. This is incorrect, as Mr Carl Monkau informs me. They employ this method of fishing during the latter part of the rainy season, when I was not among these Indians.

[2]) See »Indianerleben» fig. 11 a, Pl. 14 and fig. 75.

[3]) Grubb, p. 81.

[4]) Koch-Grünberg (3) Vol. 3, fig. 11.